RASE, COLOR, AND LANGUAGES IN ISLAM

Dr.
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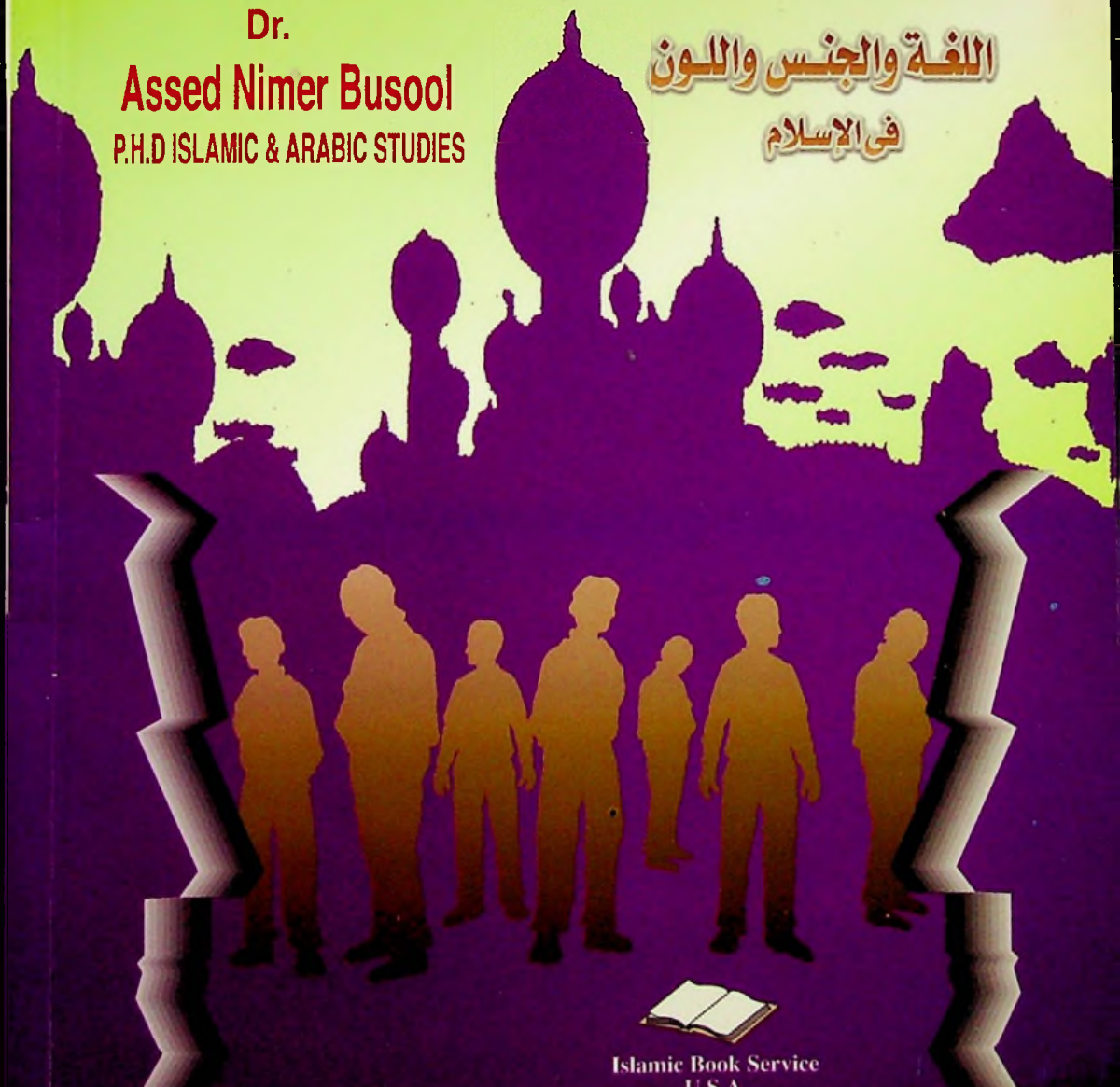
P.H.D ISLAMIC & ARABIC STUDIES

اللغة والجنس واللون في الإسلام



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About this BOOK

Race, Color, and Languages in Islam

This a book is a study of a particular verse of The Qur'an, verse 102, chapter 20. One of its English renderings unfortunately is used by certain people to support racial prejudices ignoring the fact that The Qur'an was revealed as a guidance for all mankind and Jinn, without any discrimination regarding color, race, gender, and language.

Race, color, gender, or any kind of affiliation makes no deference to Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) . On the contrary, Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) considers these differences between peoples as His grace and signs to mankind. He in His wisdom made us of different races, colors, genders and languages.

When Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) uses color in The Qur'an, be it white, or black, or blue, He uses it as a metaphor and not as a natural color of people.

Moreover, Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala sent His Messenger Muhammad (Pbbuh) as a mercy for the whole universe.

The Prophet (Pbbuh) himself lived up to Allah's description of his mission as a mercy for the whole universe.Obviously, the Prophet's (Pbbuh) mercy envelops all mankind regardless of color, race, gender and language. It also embraces animals and birds. In general it envelops all living creatures.

I hope that the study of the verse 102 of chapter 20 will convince those who deal with The Qur'an without knowledge of Arabic language, **Sirah, Hadith, and history** of the seriousness and the gravity of Qur'anic studies.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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1 - Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani - Forty Hadith, (Tr. into English)
2 - Al-Mundhiri - Forty Hadith, (Tr. into English)
3 - Forty Hadith on the Superiority of 'Ilm (Selected and translated into English with introduction)
4 - Prophet Muhammad's Sermons; Forty Noble Sermons, (Tr.into English with introduction and comments)
5 - Ibn Taimiyah, al-'Aqidah al-Wasitiyah, (Tr.into English with introduction and commentary, 2nd ed.)
6 - The Role of The Qur'an and the Sunnah in Reviving the Muslim 'Ummah, (Arabic, 2nd edition)
7 - Marriage Sermon (Khutbat Nikah)
8 - Islamic Fundamentalism?
9 - Islam's Relationship to Christianity and Judaism
10 - Muslim Women Warriors
11 - Brave Young Muslim Men
12 - Animal Rights and Ecology in Islam
13 - The Proper Pronunciation of the Language of The Qur'an
14 - Learn the Arabic Letters in the Gardens of the Beautiful Names of Allah
15 - Shapes and Forms of Arabic Letters. (3rd printing)
16 - Islam Bans Gossip and Backbiting
17 - Palestine: Whose Land Is It?

18 - Games of the Children of Palestine, (Arabic, 2nd ed)
19 - Prophet Muhammad's High Manners.
20 - Bouquet of Noble Hadith
21 - The Role of Opposition in Islam.
22 - Keeping Promises and Repaying Debt in Islam
23 - Race, Color, and Languages in Islam

Books for Children and Young Muslims:

24-27- A Guide for the Young Muslim, Book I, II, III, IV

28- The Wise Judge, Stories of Wit, Wisdom and Justice in Islam, (Adapted from classic Arabic and translated into English with introduction). Illustrated

29 - Born Free and Other Islamic Moral Stories, (Adapted from Arabic and translated into English). Illustrated

30 - The Good Neighbor and Other Moral Stories (Adapted from Classic Arabic and translated into English with introduction). Illustrated

its Biblical version very racist and advocates racism, especially against the black race. The Bible says:

"The sons of Noah who came out of the ark were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the father of Canaan.) These were the three sons of Noah, and from them came the people who were scattered over the earth.

Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father's nakedness and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's nakedness. There faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father's nakedness.

When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, he said, 'Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers.'

He also said, 'Blessed be the Lord, the God of Shem! May Canaan be the slave of Shem.

May God extend the territory of Japheth; may Japheth live in the tents of Shem, and may Canaan be his slave."

Then it happened, according to the Bible, that Ham became the father of the Africans (blacks), Shem became the father of the Jews and Middle Eastern peoples, and Japheth became the father of the European peoples.

It is interesting to see that the writer or the writers of the Bible ignored the fact that Noah was the guilty one (God forbid!) because he got drunk and lost his consciousness, and his young son entered the tent where his father was laying down naked, unaware of his father's position. As a young kid, he ran to his older brothers and informed them of their father indecent position. He did

not make fun of his father, or ridicule him. Why then, Noah did get angry at that boy and curse him and his offspring to the end of their days instead of blaming himself for getting drunk? And what kind of a role model would such a person as Noah present for his children and the following generations who take the Bible as a Sacred Book?

More interesting is the fact that the Bible tells us that God, the Merciful, the Just, fulfilled Noah's curse against his innocent son making his offspring have a despised color, namely black, and made them slaves to the offspring of the two (decent) older brothers.

Islam does not relate to this distorted Biblical narrative of Noah and his sons. Rather, Noah, in The Qur'an, is a more decent man and a prophet. Noah is mentioned in the Qur'an 43 times.

In chapter Noah/71 in The Qur'an, the chapter closes with the following prayer by Noah:

{ رب! اغفر لي ولوالدي، ولمن دخل بيتي مؤمنا وللمؤمنين والمؤمنـــات. ولا تزد الظالمين إلا تبارا.} (نوح ٢٨/٧١)

"**My Lord! Forgive me and my parents and him who enters my house believing (in You), and the believers men and women, and increase not the wrong-doers in aught save ruin.**" (Nuh 71/28)

One must assume that all Noah's sons were believers and his prayer for forgiveness includes all of them without exception.

This kind of discrimination by color, again is a Biblical idea it is not found in The Qur'an. There is no Qur'anic justification for racism not against brown eyed people, not against blue eyed people.

The Universality of the Message of Islam

The Qur'an was revealed asa guidance for all mankind and Jinn, without any discrimination of color, race, gender, and language. Allah subhanahu wa – ta 'ala says :

{ شهر رمضان الذي أنزل فيه القرآن هدى للناس وبينات من الهدى والفرقـــان.}

(البقرة ٢/١٨٥)

"**The month of *Ramadan* in which was revealed The Qur'an, a guidance for mankind, and clear proofs of the guidance and the Criterion (of right and wrong).**" (al-Baqarah 2/185)

Allah suohanahu wa – ta 'ala also says:

{ ذلك الكتاب لا ريب فيه هدى للمتقين} (البقرة ٢/٢)

"**This is the Book (The Qur'an), whereof there is no doubt, a guidance to those who keep their duties to Allah.**" (al-Baqarah 2/2)

The Qur'an, the guidance to those who keep their duties to Allah ? , starts with the following verse:

{ ألحمد لله رب العالمين.} (الفاتحة ١/١)

"**Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the universe.**"
(al-Fatihah 1/1)

Also in another chapter, Allah subhanahu wa – ta 'ala refers to Himself as the Lord of mankind, and not the Lord of a certain group or denomination. He says:

{ قل أعوذ برب الناس، ملك الناس، إله الناس.}
(الناس ١١٤/١-٣)

"**Say! I seek refuge in the Lord of mankind.**
The King of mankind.
The God of mankind." (an-Nas 114/1-3)

It is interesting to note that Allah subhanahu wa – ta 'ala does not describe Himself in The Qur'an as the God or the Lord of the Muslims, or the Christians, or the Jews, or any other religious group for that matter.

Race, color, gender, or any kind of affiliation makes no difference to Allah suohanahu wa – ta 'ala. On the contrary, Allah suohanahu wa – ta 'ala considers these differences between peoples as His grace and signs to mankind. He, in His wisdom, made us of different races, colors and languages.

When Allah suohanahu wa – ta 'ala uses color in The Qur'an, He uses it as a metaphor and not as a visible color of people, as we shall see later on in this study.

Moreover, Allah suohanahu wa – ta 'ala sent His Messenger Muhammad
(Pbbuh) as a mercy for the whole universe. He says:

{ وما أرسلناك إلا رحمة للعالمين.} (الأنبياء ١٠٧/٢١)

"**Indeed, We sent you (Muhammad) as a mercy for the whole universe.**" (al-Anbiya' 21/107)

The Prophet (Pbbuh) himself lived up to Allah's description of his mission as a mercy for the whole universe. He even refrained from cursing people or animals.

عن أبي هريرة ؟ قال: قيل: يا رسول الله! أدع على المشركين!
قال: { إني لم أبعث لعانا، وإنما بعثت رحمة.}[1]

Abu Hurairah Radiya Allah anhu said, once the Prophet (Pbbuh) was asked to call upon Allah suohanahu wa – ta 'ala against the unbelievers. He said:
"I **was not sent as a cursor, rather, I was sent as a mercy**."

Obviously, the Prophet's (Pbbuh) mercy envelops all mankind regardless of color, race, language and gender, and animals and birds, in general it envelops all living creatures.

Moreover, the Prophet (Pbbuh) emphasized that he was sent for all peoples regardless of their race, color, and language. He said:

{ بعثت إلى الأحمر والأسود.}[2]

"I was sent to the red (the white) and the black."

Examples of his mercy for animals and birds:

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[1] – مختصر صحيح مسلم، حديث١٨٢٢، ص ٤٨١.

[2] – ألدارمي، سير ٢٨؛ صحيح مسلم، مساجد ٣؛ مسند ابن حنبل.

Obviously, the Prophet's (Pbbuh) mercy envelops all mankind regardless of color, race, language and gender. The Prophet's (Pbbuh) mercy was so broad, it extended also to animals and birds. In general, it envelops all living creatures. Here are two examples of his mercy for animals and birds:

In the year eight of the *Hijrah*, the Prophet (Pbbuh) led an army of ten thousand soldiers, to liberate *Makkah* from the non-believers. When he and his army were marching through a narrow twisting road in the mountains out of *Makkah*, the Prophet (Pbbuh) noticed a mother-dog, lying in the middle of the road, nursing her puppies. When the mother-dog saw the people approaching her, she started barking and snarling to protect her puppies. Seeing that, the Prophet (Pbbuh) was full of compassion for that mother which tries to protect her babies and immediately ordered his army to halt. Then he called one of his knights and ordered him to stand next to the mother-dog and her puppies and direct the army traffic away from her, in order to protect her and her puppies from being hurt by the soldiers or their animals.[3]

Birds also won the sympathy and care of the Prophet One of the companions of the Prophet (Pbbuh) reported: "Once we were traveling with the Prophet

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[3] - Assad Busool, Born Free, p. 41

(Pbbuh) . On the way, he moved away from us to rest. In his absence, we saw a bird with its two babies. We caught the two babies and carried them with us, but their mother followed us, flying and screaming over our heads. When the Prophet (Pbbuh returned, he saw the mother-bird flying and screaming over us. He knew what had happened, and he said:

'Who made this mother bird sad by taking away her babies? Return her babies to her!'

And we did as the Prophet (Pbbuh ordered us to do and returned the baby birds to their mother which made her very happy."[4]

If the Prophet (Pbbuh) who, like The Qur'an was sent as a mercy to mankind and to all living things, how can any Muslim claim that The Qur'an curses any race, language, color or gender?

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[4] - Assad Busool, Born Free, p. 38.

How Muslims Should Deal with The Qur'an?

At this juncture, a question comes to mind: How should we Muslims deal with our Qur'an?
The answer may seem obvious.

Not really. It is more serious than many Muslims think.

Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) revealed His Glorious Book, The Qur'an, in Arabic, and He emphasized that point by repeating it eleven times in The Qur'an itself. He says:

{ إنا أنزلناه قرآنا عربيا، لعلكم تعقلون.} (يوسف ١٢/٢)

"**Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an that you may understand.**" (Yusuf 12/2)

Therefore, The Qur'an must be dealt with in the Arabic language only. In other words, those who do not know Arabic very well must avoid from making sweeping judgments based only on a rendering. Because often those renderings are not accurate and do not convey the true meaning of the Arabic terms and verses. As a result the reader of a rendering is at the mercy of the renderer.

How can a person who cannot read one Qur'anic verse in Arabic properly embark on interpreting The Qur'an?

I am sure my statement will arouse the ire of many Muslim brothers and sisters who do not know Arabic, and maybe some of them will consider it a racist remark.

On the contrary, I believe that we Muslims must all protect our Sacred Book from being abused by ignorance of its original language. This has it happened. This misunderstanding of the meaning of the verse under discussion is based on a wrong rendering and draws a conclusion contrary to the spirit of The Qur'an and the religion of Islam which emphasize equality between all human beings.

The Qur'an's rendering in any language is good only for enabling the speaker of that language to have a feeling for the message of The Qur'an and not for drawing conclusions and erroneous judgments. Therefore, Muslims must protect their Qur'an from the abuse of faulty renderings, incorrect conclusions and erroneous judgments.

Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) protected The Qur'an from distortion, deletion or addition to it, but Muslims must protect it from misinterpretations that fit individual whims and desires, especially when such interpretations are based on sheer ignorance of the original language of The Qur'an, the Arabic language.

I'd like to share with you the following piece of information about one of our great scholars of *Fiqh*, *Muhammad Ibn al-Hasan ash-Shaibani*
(d.189 H./804 C. E.), the student of the great *Imam*, *Abu Hanifah. Ash-Shaibani* who said:

"My father left for me thirty thousand *dirhams*. I spent fifteen thousand for learning Arabic grammar and poetry, and fifteen thousand for learning *hadith* and *fiqh*."[5]
This great scholar spent half of his fortune on learning the Arabic language before he learned *hadith* and *fiqh*.

In this study I am going to present the reader with a practical example of what it entails to do even partial justice to interpreting The Qur'an by quoting 14 translations, 18 classic and modern Arabic books of Qur'an interpretation, and 6 classic Arabic dictionaries on the verse in question, verse 102 of *Surat Ta Ha* 20.

Those who know Arabic will appreciate the seriousness of interpreting or translating The Qur'an by comparing these different books of *Tafsir* and these Arabic dictionaries.

It is appropriate at this point to present readers and The Qur'an interpreters who are not properly equipped to deal with The Qur'an with a *hadith* by the Prophet (pbbuh) warning such people very sternly. The Prophet (pbbuh) said:

{ من قال في القرآن برأيه فأصاب، فقد أخطأ.}[6]

"**Whoever interprets The Qur'an by his own opinion and it happens that he is right, still he is wrong**
(to use his opinion alone without knowledge)."

The Messenger of Allah (Pbbuh) also said:

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[5] - Abu 'Ali at-Tanukhi, Nishwar al-Muhadarah, vol. 5, p. 185.

[6] – ألطبراني، المعجم الأوسط، م ٥، ص ٢٠٨، حديث ٥١٠١.

{ من قال في القرآن بغير علم، فليتبوأ مقعده من النار.}[٧]

"Whoever talks about The Qur'an without knowledge, let him occupy his abode in the Fire."

The early Muslims took the Prophet's injunctions in relation to dealing with The Qur'an very seriously.

'Ali Ibn Abi Talib (Radiay Allah anhu), the fourth caliph of Islam, one day entered the grand mosque in *al-Kufah*, in southern Iraq. There he noticed a crowd surrounding a man who was answering their legal questions, but who was confusing rules and issues and mixing *Halal* (lawful) with *Haram* (unlawful). *'Ali* (Radiay Allah anhu) asked him, 'Do you know the abrogation in The Qur'an?'

The man answered, 'No.'

'Ali said, 'You threw yourself and others into Hell. You are a fake man who likes to be known.'

Then *'Ali* grabbed him by his ear and twisted it, and said to him, '**Do not judge in our mosque any more**.' "

This is the story of a man who was ignorant of one aspect of the knowledge of The Qur'an and who was punished and banned from expressing his legal opinion. Imagine what *'Ali* (Radiay Allah anhu) would say and do today to those who make sweeping judgments in regard to The Qur'an while they do not know Arabic or only a little of it?

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[٧] – ألبغوي، شرح السنة، م ١، ص ٢٥٨، حديث ١١٩.

Therefore, brothers and sisters in Islam, be careful of your duties to Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) and His Book, and His Messenger and refrain from dealing loosely with The Qur'an and leave it to highly qualified scholars of The Qur'an and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (Pbbuh)

I hope that the study of the verse 102/ 20 will convince those who deal with The Qur'an without knowledge of the seriousness and the gravity of Qur'anic studies. **he Meaning of the Term زرقا Zurqan in Surat Ta Ha 20/102**

English Rendering of Verse 102/20

Responding to brother *Yahya's* request, I surveyed the available English renderings of The Qur'an. Then I surveyed the available classic and modern Arabic Qur'an interpretations and classic Arabic dictionaries.

What I found in the absolute majority of The Qur'an's interpretations does not conform with this erroneous rendering denouncing blue eyed people as we shall see later on.

Unfortunately we do not have a canonized or uniform rendering of The Qur'an, to which people can refer and avoid other renderings. Almost all renderings of The Qur'an so far are individually done. As a matter of fact, no one person by himself can render The Qur'an into any

other language. The Qur'an's rendering must be done collectively by a committee of scholars who are expert in both Arabic and English, and well versed in *Sirah*, *Hadith*, Arabic grammar, Islamic history and classic Arabic literature and poetry.

So far, none of the individual renderers of The Qur'an has these qualifications as it appears from their rendering; therefore, it is not surprising to find from the variety of conflicting interpretations that they misunderstood the meaning of many verses. Moreover, they base their understanding of The Qur'an on only one of the classic interpretations of The Qur'an which creates many mistakes. Worse than that, some renderers rely on dictionaries for their translation of The Qur'an.

An example of this practice is the rendering of verse 102/20, the theme of this study.

1 - *Muhammad Asad* rendered this verse as follows:
"On the Day when the trumpet is blown: for on that Day We will assemble all such as had been lost in sin, their eyes dimmed[8] [by terror]."

***2 - Pickthal rendered it as*:**
"The day when the Trumpet is blown. On that day We assemble the guilty white-eyed (with terror)."

***3 - Abd Allah Yusuf 'Ali rendered it as follows*:**

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[8] - Lit., "blue [of eye]" - i.e., as if their eyes were covered with a bluish, opaque film.

"The Day when the Trumpet will be sounded: that Day, We shall gather the sinful, blear-eyed (with terror)."[9]

4 - In a rendering which is published by Saheeh International without the name of the renderer, the verse is rendered as follows:

"The Day the Horn will be blown. And We will gather the criminals, that Day, blue-eyed."[10]

5 - M. H. Shakir rendered it:

"On the day when the trumpet shall be blown, and We will gather the guilty, blue-eyed, on that day."

6 - N. J. Dawood rendered it:

"On that day We shall assemble all the sinners. Their eyes will become dim with terror."

7- J. M. Rodwell rendered it:

"On that day there shall be a blast on the trumpet, and We will gather the wicked together on that day with leaden[11] eyes."

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[9] - Zurq = having eyes different from the normal color, which in the East is black and white, having blue eyes, or eyes afflicted with dimness or blindness, or squint; hence metaphorically, blear-eyed (with terror).

[10] - From terror, or blinded completely.

[11] - I have adopted the word *leaden* as expressive of the idea implied in the original word, viz. *gray* or *grayish blue, dulled, dimmed.* The Arabians have a great aversion to blue and gray eyes as characteristic of their enemies the Greeks. The word, however, may also mean *blind.* Comp. v. 124, 5.

***8 - E. H. Palmer rendered it*:**

" On the day when the trumpet shall be blown, and We will gather the sinners in that day blue-eyed.[12]"

9 - Muhammad Zafrulla Khan rendered it:

"The day when the trumpet will be blown. On that day We shall gather the sinful ones together, blue-eyed."

10 - Muhammad Ali rendered it as follows:

"The day when the trumpet is blown; and We shall gather the guilty, blue-eyed, on that day."[13]

11- T. B. Irving rendered it:

"The day when the Trumpet shall be blown. We shall summon bleary-eyed criminals on that day."

12 - In the English rendering of S. Abul A'la Maududi by Muhammad Akbar Muradpuri and 'Abdul 'Aziz Kamal, it is rendered as follows:

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[12] - Because 'blue eyes' were especially detested by the Arabs as being characteristic if their greatest enemies, the Greeks. So they speak of an enemy as 'black-livered', 'red whiskered', and 'blue-eyed'. The word in the text may also mean 'blear-eyed', or 'blind'.

[13] - In the footnote Muhammad Ali wrote: "The word *Zurq* means *blue-eyed.* According to Bd (Baidawi), blue being the color of the eyes of the Rum (i.e., the Greeks or the Romans), who were most hated by the Arabs, that color was regarded by the Arabs as the worst color for the eye. The word may also signify blind, in reference to the guilty being raised up blind in the Resurrection, for which see v. 124.

"On that Day, when the Trumpet will be blown and We will muster the criminals while their eyes shall be dimmed (with terror)."

13 - Majid Fakhri rendered it as follows:

"On the day when the trumpet shall be blown and We will gather the wicked sinners blue-eyed [with terror]."

14 - Muhammad Taqd-Din al-Hilali and M. Muhsin Khan rendered it as follows:

"The Day when the Trumpet will be blown (the second blowing): that Day, We shall gather the *Mujrimun* (criminals, polytheists, sinners, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah, etc.) *Zurqa*: (blue eyed with black faces)."[14]

All the aforementioned renderings rendered the word *Zurq* as '*blue-eyed*', '*blurred-eyes*' and '*blind*'. Moreover, some renderers quoted *az-Zamakhshari* and *al-Baidawi* who interpreted *Zurq* as the blue-eyed Greeks and the Romans because of the Arabs' hatred to them.

The Arab Commentators on Verse 102/20

Now let us survey the classic and modern Arabic books of interpretation to find out, how the classic commentators on The Qur'an interpreted the term '*Zurq*'.

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[14] - The Interpretation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an in English, p. 489.

1 - ***Ibn 'Abbas*** (d. 68 H./687 C.E.) **interpreted it as, 'blind'.**[15]

2 - ***At-Tabari*** (d. 310 H./923 C.E.) **interpreted as follows:**

وقوله: { **ونحشر المجرمين يومئذ زرقا**}، يقول تعالى ذكره: ونسوق أهل الكفر بالله يومئذ إلى موقف القيامة زرقا. فقيل: عنى بالزرق في هذا الموضع، ما يظهر في أعينهم من شدة العطش الذي يكون بهم عند الحشر لرأي العين من الزرق. وقيل: أريد بذلك أنهم يحشرون عميا، كالذي قال الله: { **ونحشرهم يوم القيامة على وجوههم عميا، وبكما، وصما.**} (الإسراء ١٧/٩٧)

Allah, the Exalted, the Glorified, says: On that day We will drive the unbelieving folks to the judgment court blue, i.e. the look of their eyes out of intense thirst they experience at the time of assembly.

It is said, that they will be assembled blind, as Allah says: "**And We shall assemble them on the Day of Resurrection on their faces, blind, dumb and deaf.**"

3 - *An-Nasafi* (d. 537 H./ 1142 C.E.), interpreted it as:

{ **ونحشر المجرمين يومئذ زرقا**} حال، أي: عميا. كما قال { **ونحشرهم يوم القيامة على وجوههم عميا، وبكما، وصما**} (ألإسراء ١٧/٩٧)، وهذا لأن حدقة من يذهب نور بصره تزرق.[16]

Blue, means, blind, as Allah (subhanhu wa –ta' ala) says:

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[15] – تنوير المقباس من تفسير ابن عباس، لأبي طاهر محمد بن يعقوب الفيروزآبادي، ص ١٩٨.

[16] تفسير النسفي، م ٣، ٦٥.

"And We shall assemble them on the Day of Resurrection on their faces, blind dumb and deaf." (al-Isra 17/97), and that because the pupil of the person who loses the sight of his eye turns blue.

4 - ***Az-Zamakhshari*** (d. 538 H./1144 C.E.) interpreted it:

قيل في الزرق قولان: أحدهما أن الزرقة أبغض شيء من ألوان العيون إلى العرب، لأن الروم أعداؤهم وهم زرق العيون، ولذلك قالوا في صفة العدو أسود الكبد، أصهب السبال، أزرق العين. والثاني: أن المراد العمى، لأن حدقة من يذهب نور بصره تزراق.[١٧]

There are two opinions for the meaning of the term *Zurq*:
1 - Blueness is the most hated of colors of the eyes to the Arabs, because their enemies, the Romans are blue-eyed; therefore, they said of the description of the enemy, his lever is black, his beard is red, and his eye is blue.
2 - It means, blindness, because when the pupil of the eye loses its color it turns blue.

5 - ***Al-Fakhr ar-Razi*** (544-604 H./1149-1207 C.E.) interpreted as:

أما قوله: { **ونحشر المجرمين يومئذ زرقا**}، ففيه مسائل:

المسألة الأولى: قالت المعتزلة، قوله { المجرمين} يتناول الكفار والعصاة، فيدل على عدم العفو عن العصاة، وقال ابن عباس رضي الله عنهما: يريد بالمجرمين الذين اتخذوا مع الله إلها آخر.

المسألة الثانية: اختلفوا في المراد بالزرقة على وجوه:

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[١٧] – الزمخشري، الكشاف، م ٢، ص ٥٥٣.

أحدها: قال الضحاك ومقاتل يعني، زرق العيون، سود الوجوه، وهي زرقة تتشـــوه بهـــا خلقتهم، والعرب تتشاءم بذلك، فإن قيل، أليس أن الله تعالى أخبر أنهـــم { **يحشـــرون عميا**} فكيف يكون أعمى وأزرق؟ قلنا، لعله يكون أعمى في حال، وأزرق في حال.

وثانيها: ألمراد من الزرقة العمى. قال الكلبي: زرقا أي عميا. قال الزجاج: يخرجون بصـــواء في أول مرة، ويعمون في المحشر. وسواد العين إذا ذهب تزرق. فإن قيل، كيـــف يكـــون أعمى؟ وقد قال تعالى: { **إنما نؤخرهم ليوم تشخص فيه الأبصار**}، وشخوص البصر مـن الأعمى محال، وقد قال في حقهم: { **إقرأ كتابك**} والأعمى كيف يقرأ؟

فالجواب: أن أحوالهم تختلف.

وثالثها: قال أبو مسلم: المراد بهذه الزرقة، شخوص أبصارهم، والأزرق شـــاخص لأنـــه لضعف بصره يكون محدقا نحو الشيء يريد أن يتبينه، وهذه حال الخائف المتوقع لما يكـــره، وهو كقوله: { **إنما نؤخرهم ليوم تشخص فيه الأبصار**}

ورابعها: زرقا: عطاشا. هكذا رواه ثعلب عن إبن الأعرابي، قال: لأنهم من شدة العطـــش يتغير سواد عيونهم حتى تزرق، ويدل على هذا التفسير قوله تعالى: { **ونسوق المجرمـــين إلى جهنم وردا**}.

وخامسها: حكى ثعلب عن إبن الأعرابي قال: طامعين فيما لا ينالونه.[١٨]

As to His saying, "**We shall gather the guilty, *Zurqan* (blue-eyed), on that day**", there are different explanations.

1 - The Mu'tazilites said, His saying, "the criminals" includes the unbelievers and the disobedient, it indicates that the disobedients will not be forgiven. *Ibn 'Abbas* ? said, He intends by "the criminals" those who worshipped another god beside Allah.

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[١٨] – الفخر الرازي، التفسير الكبير أو مفاتيح الغيب، دار الفكر، بيروت، ١٤١٠هـ/١٩٩٠م، ج ٢٢، ص ص ١١٤-١١٥.

2 - They disagreed over what is intended by *az-Zurqah* (the blueness) in many ways.

A - *Ad-Dahhak* and *Muqatil* said blue eyes means, black faces, and it is a blueness which deforms their features. The Arabs consider that an ill omen. If someone claims, doesn't Allah, the Exalted, inform us that "They will be assembled blind," then how could it be blind and blue? We say, maybe in one state he will be blind, and in another state he will be blue.

B - What is intended by blueness is blindness. *Al-Kalbi* said, blue means blind. *Az-Zajjaj* said, they will be resurrected seeing in the first time; then they will be blinded in the assembling court. The darkness of the eye when it is lost, the eye turns blue. Then if it is said, How will he be blind, while Allah, the Exalted, says, **"We but give them a respite till a Day when eyes will stare (in terror)"** (Ibrahim 14/42), the staring of the eye by the blind is impossible, and He says about them, "**Read your record of deeds,**" and how the blind can read? The answer is, that state will change.

C - *Abu Muslim* said, what is intended by this blueness is, the staring of their eyes, and the blue is staring, because of the weakness of his eye-sight, he will be staring at the thing trying to see it, and this is the state of the frightened person who anticipates what he fears most, and this is like Allah's saying, **"We but give them a respite till a Day when eyes will stare (in terror)."** (Ibrahim 14/42).

D - Blue means, thirsty. Thus *Tha'lab* reported it from *Ibn al-A'rabi*, who said, because of the intensity of the thirst, the blackness of their eyes turns until they become blue, which supports this explanation, the saying of

Allah, the Exalted : "**And We shall drive the sinners to Hell thirsty.**".

E - *Tha'lab,* reported from *Ibn al-A'rabi*, said, they are hoping for what they cannot get.

6 - ***Al-Qurtubi*** (d. 671 H./1272 C.E.) **interpreted it as follows:**

{ زرقا} حال من المجرمين، والزرق بخلاف الكحل. والعرب تتشاءم بزرق العيون وتذمه؛ أي تشوه خلقتهم بزرقة عيونهم وسواد وجوههم.

وقال الكلبي والفراء: { زرقا} أي عميا.

وقال الأزهري: أي عطاشا قد ازرقت أعينهم من شدة العطش؛ وقاله الزجاج؛ قال: لأن سواد العين يتغير ويزرق من العطش. وقيل: إنه الطمع الكاذب إذا تعقبته الخيبة؛ يقال: ابيضت عيني لطول انتظاري لكذا. وقول خامس: إن المراد بالزرقة شخوص البصر من شدة الخوف. ***قال الشاعر:***

لقد زرقت عيناك يا ابن مكعبر كما كل ضبي من اللؤم أزرق

يقال: أزرق العين، والمرأة زرقاء بينة الزرق. والإسم الزرقة. وقد زرقت عينه بالكسر وازرقت ازرقاقا، وازراقت عينه ازريقاقا. وقال سعيد بن جبير: قيل لابن عباس في قوله: { ونحشر المجرمين يومئذ زرقا}، وقال في موضع آخر:

{ ونحشرهم يوم القيامة على وجوههم عميا، وبكما، وصما}، فقال: إن ليوم القيامة حالات؛ فحالة يكونون فيها زرقا، وحالة عميا.[١٩]

Zurqan (blue) is *Hal* (the state) of the criminals, and *az-Zaraq* the (blueness) of the eye is the opposite of *al-Kahal* (the blackness) of the eye. The Arabs perceive the blueness of the eye as an evil omen and they denounce it; the verse means, that their features will be

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[١٩] - تفسير القرطبي، م ١١، ص ٢٤٤.

deformed by the blueness of their eyes and the blackness of their faces.

Al-Azhari[20] and *az-Zajjaj* said, they are thirsty, their eyes turn blue out of intense thirst, because the blackness of the eye changes and turns blue out of thirst. It is also said, it is the false hope when it is followed by failure. It is said, my eyes turned blue out of my waiting very long for such and such. Also it means the stare of the eyes out of intense fear.

The poet said:

O Son of *Muka'bar*! your eyes turned blue, as every man of the tribe of *Dabbah* is blue out of nastiness.

Sa'id Ibn Jubair said, *Ibn 'Abbas* was asked about the verse, "We shall gather the guilty, *Zurqan* (blue-eyed), on that day." He said in another place, Allah (subhanahu wa-ta'ala) says, "**And We shall assemble them on the Day of Resurrection on their faces, blind dumb and deaf.**" (al-Isra 17/97), the Day of Resurrection has different states, in one state they will be blue, in another state they will be blind.

7 - *Al-Baidawi* (d. 685 H./1286 C.E.) in his interpretation copied the words of *az-Zamakhshari*:

{ ونحشر المجرمين يو مئذ زرقا. }، زرق العين، وصفوا بذلك لأن الزرقة أسوأ ألـوان العين وأبغضها إلى العرب، لأن الروم كانوا أعدى أعدائهم، وهم زرق العـين، ولذلـك

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[20] - Al-Azhari (895-980 C.E.), a famous Arab lexicographer, is the author of the famous Arabic dictionary, Tahdhib al-Lughah.

قالوا في صفة العدو: أسود الكبد، أصهب السبال، أزرق العين. أو عميا، فـــإن حدقـــة الأعمى تزراق.[٢١]

They are described *Zurq* (blue), because blueness is the most hated of the colors of the eyes to the Arabs, because their enemies, the Romans are blue-eyed; therefore, they said of the description of the enemy, his lever is black, his beard is red, and his eye is blue.

Or it means, blindness, because when the pupil of the eye loses its color, it turns blue.

8 - *Ibn Kathir* (700-774 H.) interpreted as follows:

﴿ زرقا﴾، قيل: معناه: زرق العيون من شدة ما هم فيه من الأهوال.[٢٢]

Zurq (blue), it means, their eyes are blue as a result of what they will experience of fright.

9 - *As-Suyuti* (d. 911 H./1505 C.E.) interpreted:

وأخرج ابن أبي حاتم عن ابن عباس، أن رجلا أتاه، فقال: أرأيت قوله: ﴿ ونحشر المجرمين يومئذ زرقا﴾، وأخرى عميا. قال: إن يوم القيامة فيه حـــالات: يكونون في حال زرقا، وفي حال عميا.[٢٣]

A certain man asked *Ibn 'Abbas*, what do you say about Allah' saying: "We shall gather the guilty, *Zurqan* (blue-eyed), on that day," and another time, He says,

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[٢١] – تفسير البيضاوي، ص ٤٢٢.

[٢٢] – إبن كثير، تفسير القرآن العظيم، م ٥، ص ٣٠٩.

[٢٣] – ألسيوطي، الدر المنثور في التفسير بالمأثور، م ٤، ص ٥٥٠.

" *'Umyan*, blind." *Ibn 'Abbas* said, the Day of Resurrection has different states, in one state they will be blue, in another state they will be blind.

10 - *Al-Jalalain, Jalal ad-Din al-Mahalli*
(d. 1170 H./1757 C.E.) interpreted as:

{ زرقا}، عيونهم مع سواد وجوههم.[٢٤]

Their eyes are blue and their faces are black.

١١ - *Ash-Shawkani* (d. 1250 H./1834 C.E.)interpreted it:

{ زرقا}، زرق العيون، أي: عطاشا لأن سواد العين يتغير بالعطش إلى الزرقة ويحتمل أن المراد زرق الأبدان من الغيظ والندامة.[٢٥]

Their eyes are blue, i.e., thirsty, because the blackness of the eye changes as a result of thirst to the blue. It could be that what is intended with the blueness is their bodies are blue as a result of anger and regret.

١٢ - *Muhammad Nawawi al-Jawi* interpreted it as:

{ زرقا}، أي: زرق العيون، سود الوجوه، لأن زرقة العيون أبغض ألوان العين إلى العرب، أو عميا، لأن حدقة الأعمى تزرق، أو عطاشا، لأنهم من شدة العطش يتغير سواد عيونهم حتى تزرق، أو طامعين فيما لا ينالونه.[٢٦]

Zurqan, i.e. blue eyes and black faces, because the blueness of the eyes is the most hated color for the Arabs, or blind, because the pupil of the blind person's eye turns

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[٢٤] – تفسير الجلالين، ج ٢، ص ٢٦.

[٢٥] – الإمام الشوكاني، زبدة التفسير من فتح القدير أ غختصره محمد سليمان الأشقر، ص ٤١٦.

[٢٦] – محمد نووي الجاوي، مراح لبيد، م ٢، ص ٢٨.

blue, or thirsty, because of the intensity of thirst changes the color of their eyes from black to blue, or they hope for what they cannot get.

13 - *Al-Wahidi* interpreted as:

{ زرقا}، أي زرق العيون، سود الوجوه.[٢٧]

Blue eyes, black faces.

١٤ - *Al-Qasimi* (1866-1914) interpreted it as:

{ يومئذ زرقا}، أي زرق الوجوه. الزرقة تقرب من السواد. فهو بمعنى: { وتسود وجوه} (آل عمران ٣/١٠٦)

وقال أبو مسلم: المراد بهذه الزرقة، شخوص أبصارهم. والأزرق شاخص، لأنه لضعف بصره، يكون محدقا نحو الشيء يريد أن يتبينه. وهذه حال الخائف المتوقع لما يكره. وهو كقوله تعالى: { إنما يؤخرهم ليوم تشخص فيه الأبصار} (إبراهيم ١٤/٤٢)، نقله الرازي. والأول أظهر.[٢٨]

Zurqan, i.e. blue faces, because blueness is close to blackness; it is the same meaning as, "**And some faces will be blackened**" (Al 'Imran 3/106)

Abu Muslim said, What is intended by this blueness is the gaze of their eyes. And the blue person is a gazing person, this is the state of a frightened person who expects the worst, and it is similar to Allah, the Exalted saying: **"He but gives them a respite till a Day when eyes will stare (in terror)."** (Ibrahim 14/42)

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[٢٧] – بهامش مراح لبيد، م ٢، ص ٢٨.

[٢٨] – تفسير القاسمي، المسمى محاسن التأويل، م ١١، ص ٤٢٠٨.

This is how *ar-Razi* reported it; however, the first explanation is more likely.

15 - *Muhammad Hasanain Makhluf* interpreted it:

{ زرقا}، زرق العيون من شدة الهول. أو عميا؛ لأن العين إذا ذهب نورها ازرق ناظرها.[٢٩]

Blue eyes as a result of great fear, or blind, because when the eye loses its sight, it turns blue.

16 - *Muhammad Fu'ad Maghniyyih* interpreted as:

{ ونحشر المجرمين يومئذ زرقا.}، زرق الألوان من هول المطلع وروعات المفزع.[٣٠]

Their color is blue as a result of the great fear and horror of the resurrection..

1٧ - *Sayyid Qutub* (d. 1965) interpreted as:

فإذا نفخ في البوق للتجمع، فالمجرمون يحشرون زرق الوجوه من الكدر والغم.[٣١]

When the trumpet will be blown for resurrection, the criminals will be gathered while their faces are blue out of distress and sorrow.

1٨ - *Ad-Damiri*, interpreted in verse:

زرقا فقل عميا وقل عطاشا ينسفها يفتها إذا شا[٣٢]

Blue, means, blind, or thirsty.

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[٢٩] – حسنين مخلوف، صفوة البيان لمعاني القرآن، ص ٤٠٧.

[٣٠] – محمد فؤاد مغنية، التفسير المبين، ص ٤١٦.

[٣١] – سيد قطب، في ظلال القرآن، م ٥، ص ٤٩٧.

[٣٢] – ألدميري، كتاب التيسير في علوم التفسير، ص ٧١.

The Term Zurq in Arabic Dictionaries

Here I will survey few classic Arabic lexicons:

1- *Ibn Manzur* (630-711H./1232-1311 CE) defined *Zurq* in his lexicon:

وقوله تعالى: { **ونحشر المجرمين يومئذ زرقا**}، فسره ثعلب، فقال: معناه عطاش. قال ابن سيدة: وعندي أن هذا ليس على القصد الأول، إنما ازرقت أعينهم من شدة العطش. وقيل: عميا يخرجون من قبورهم بصراء كما خلقوا أول مرة، ويعمون في المحشر، وإنما قيل زرقا لأن السواد يزرق إذا ذهبت نواظرهم. ويقال زرقا طامعين فيما لا ينالونه.[٣٣]

Allah ? saying, "**We shall gather the guilty, *Zurqan* (blue), on that day**", *Tha'alb* interpreted it thus: "It means thirsty. *Ibn Sidah* said, I think, this is not what it meant; rather, it means, their eyes will become blue out of intense thirst. It is said, blind, they will be resurrected from their graves seeing as they were created the first time, then they will be blinded at the assembling court. It is said, *Zurq* (blue), because the blackness of the eye turns blue when they become blind. And it is said, *Zurq* because they are hoping for what they cannot get.

2 - *Murtada az-Zabidi* (1145-1205 H/1732-1790 C.E.) defined it in his lexicon as follows:

ألزرق : ألعمى، ومنه قوله تعالى: { **ونحشر المؤمنين يومئذ زرقا**}، أي: عميا، وقيل عطاشا. قاله ثعلب. قال ابن سيده: وعندي أن هذا ليس على القصد الأول،

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[٣٣] – إبن منظور، لسان العرب، م ١٠، ص ١٣٩، مادة زرق.

إنما معناه: ازرقت عيونهم من شدة العطش. وقال الزجاج: يخرجون من قبورهم بصراء كما خلقوا أول مرة ويعمون في المحشر.[٣٤]

Az-Zaraq (blueness), means, blindness, as Allah, the Exalted said, "We shall gather the guilty, *Zurqan* (blue), on that day," i.e. blind. It is also said, thirsty, according to *Tha'lab*. *Ibn Sidah* said, I think this is not what it meant; rather, it means, their eyes will become blue out of intense thirst. *Az-Zajjaj* said, they will be resurrected from their graves seeing as they were created the first time, then they will be blinded at the assembling court.

3 - *Ar-Raghib al-Asfahani* (d. 425 H/1033 CE) defined it as follows:

{ زرقا يتخافتون}، أي: عميا عيونهم لا نور لها.

"*Zurqan yatakhafatun*," i.e. blind, their eyes have no light.

4 - *Al-Fairuzabadi* (d. 817 H/1414 CE) defined *az-Zaraq* as follows:

ألزرق : ألعمى و { يومئذ زرقا}، أي: عميا. وقيل: عطاش، قاله ثعلب. قال ابن سيده: وعندي أن هذا ليس على القصد الأول، إذ معناه: ازرقت أعينهم من شدة العطش، وقال الزجاج: يخرجون من قبورهم بصراء كما خلقوا أولا، ويعمون في الحشر.[٣٥]

Az-Zaraq: blindness, and "*Wa-yawma 'idhin zurqan*", i.e. blind. And it has been said, thirsty, according to *Tha'lab*[36].

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[٣٤] – ألزبيدي، تاج العروس، فصل الزاي من باب القاف، م ٦، ص ٣٦٨.

[٣٥] – الفيروزآبادي، القاموس المحيط، مادة الزرق.

Ibn Sidah[37] said it means that their eyes turned blue out of intense thirst.
Az-Zajjaj said, they will be resurrected from their graves seeing as they were created the first time, then they will lose their eye-sight at the Resurrection Court.

5 - *Al-Jawhari* (d. 396 H/1005 CE) in his lexicon, *as-Sihah*, did not discuss the meaning of the verse when he interpreted the meaning of *Zurq*.

6 - *Ibn Duraid* (d. 321 H./933 C.E.) mentioned the verse and commented on it in his lexicon, *al-Jamharah*:

قال الشاعر:

لقد زرقت عيناك يا ابن مكعبر كما كل ضبي من اللوم أزرق

وسميت الأسنة زرقا للونها. وفي كتاب الله عز وجل:

{ ونحشر المجرمين يومئذ زرقا}. قال المفسرون: عميا لا يبصرون. والله أعلم.[٣٨]

The poet said:
O Son of *Muka'bar*! your eyes turned blue, as every man of the tribe of *Dabbah* is blue out of nastiness.

The spears are called blue, because of their blue color. In the Book of Allah(subhanahu wa ta' ala) , "**We shall gather the guilty, *Zurqan* (blue-eyed), on that day**", The Qur'an interpreters say, Blind, do not see. And Allah knows best.

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[36] - An Arab grammarian, d. 291H./903C.E.

[37] - An Arab lexicographer, philologian, d. 458H/1065C.E.

[٣٨] -إبن دريد، كتاب جمهرة اللغة، م ٢، ص٧٠٨، مادة زرق.

The absolute majority of the classic and modern Arab Qur'an commentators, commented on the term زرقا *Zurqan* as; thirsty, blind, white-eyed, black faced out of fear and anxiety.

Supporting the blindness and white-eyed interpretation, is verse 82, *Surat Yusuf* 12: Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) says:

{وتولى عنهم، وقال: يا أسفى على يوسف، وابيضت عيناه من الحزن، فهو كظيم.} (يوسف ١٢/٨٤)

"**And he (Jacob) turned away from them and said: Alas! my grief for Joseph! And his eyes whitened (became blind) with sorrow that he was suppressing.**" (Yusuf 12/84)

Supporting this meaning is the following Qur'anic verse that describes Jacob as blind. Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) says:

{فلما أن جاء البشير، ألقاه على وجهه، فارتد بصيرا.}

(يوسف ١٢/٩٦)

"Then, when the bearer of glad tidings came, he laid it (Joseph's shirt) on his face and he became a seer once more." (Yusuf 12/96)

Moreover, The Qur'an informs us that on the Day of Judgment some faces will be brightened and other faces will be blackened regardless of their race, color, sex, and language. The

which determines the color of their faces or eyes is belief in Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) alone and implementing His ordinances. Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) says:

{ يوم تبيض وجوه وتسود وجوه. فأما الذين اسودت وجوههم. أكفرتم بعد إيمانكم؟ فذوقوا العذاب بما كنتم تكفرون. وأما الذين ابيضت وجوههم، ففي رحمة الله. هم فيها خالدون.} (آل عمران ٣/١٠٦-١٠٧)

"On the day when (some) faces will be brightened and (some) faces will be blackened; and as for those whose faces have been blackened, it will be said unto them: Disbelieved you after your belief? Then taste the punishment for that you disbelieved.
As for those whose faces have been brightened, indeed, in the mercy of Allah they dwell forever."
(Al 'Imran 3/106-107)

Again Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) describes the faces of those who disbelieved in Allah and lied concerning Him as black on the Day of Judgment. Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) says:

﴿ويوم القيامة ترى الذين كذبوا على الله وجوههم مسودة. أليس في جهنم مثوى للمتكبرين.﴾ (الزمر ٣٩/٦١)

"**And on the Day of Resurrection you (Muhammad) will see those who lied concerning Allah with their faces blackened. Is not the home of the scorners in Hell?**" (az-Zumar 39/61)

Among The Qur'an's interpretations which I consulted, only *az-Zamakhshari* followed by *al-Baidawi* who lived 150 years after him, and in the modern period *al-Alusi* mentioned that the blue-eyed Romans and the Greeks were the enemies of the Arabs. Therefore, only according to these three was the verse revealed to express the punishment of the hateful blue-eyed people to the Arabs on the Day of Judgment.

Since the absolute majority of the Arab Qur'an interpreters did not mention this, one wonders, where *az-Zamakhshari* - who died over 500 years after The Qur'an was revealed - got that idea? Especially, since he did not quote any classic historical source to support his explanation of the verse.

More interesting is to find out that the grammarian *az-Zamakhshari* is the only classic interpreter to come up with an erroneous interpretation. Even from a grammatical point of view, his interpretation is wrong. Because the term زرقـــا *Zurqan* in the verse is حال *Hal* (a state); therefore, the term should be understood as follows: "We will assemble the criminals while they are

blue." And not the blue-eyed criminals, be they Greeks, Romans, or any other race.

Moreover, many Arab grammarians, philologians and historians of Arabic literature quoted poetry verses and terms which depict some Arabs as *Zurq* (blue) because of their low behavior. This is a metaphor which has been used by the Arabs from ancient times until today. In the Palestinian dialect, when we describe a mean, low person we say: عظمه ازرق (his bones are blue).

More interesting is to find that some non-Muslim Qur'an renderers quoted this statement of *az-Zamakhshari* and *al-Baidawi* and used it not only as the true but the only interpretation of the verse, or the reason for its revelation, and ignored the majority of The Qur'an interpretations. This fact misled contemporary quasi-Muslims to use it as support for their hatred for other peoples who do not belong to their race and color, and who do not adhere to their sectarian beliefs.

The term أزرق العينين والشعر *Azraq al-'ainain wa-sh-sha'r*, blue-eye and blue-hair (skin), has been used as a metaphor for an evil, untrustworthy person, as *'Amir Ibn Juwain*, a Pre-Islamic poet described the Arab king of southern Iraq, *an-Nu'man Ibn al-Mundhir*, who without any doubt was physically a dark, brown-eyed man:

لقد نهيت ابن عمار، وقلت له: لا تأمنن أزرق العينين والشعره[٣٩]

"I warned *Ibn 'Ammar*, and told him: "do not trust the (man who) has blue-eyes and blue-hair (skin)."

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[٣٩] – الأخفش الأصغر، كتاب الإختيارين، ص ١١٩.

Al-Asma'i (d. 216 H./832 C.E.) reported:

"حججت، فبينا أنا بالأبطح إذا شيخ في سحق عباء، صعل الرأس، أئط، أخـــزر، أزرق[40]، كأنما ينظر من فص زجاج أخضر..."

"I went to pilgrimage to *Makkah*, and while I was in the valley of *Makkah*, I spotted an old man from the tribe of *Damrah*, wearing a torn cloak. His head is small, his beard is small, his looks are piercing, blue-eyed, as if he is looking through a green glass stone..."[41]

A pre-Islamic leader of the tribe of *'Abs*, by the name of *Qais Ibn Zuhair*, was *Azraq* (blue), i.e. white with blue-eyes.[42]

At this juncture, it is important to present the reader with the attitude of The Noble Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad (pbbuh) toward race, color, gender and languages.

Those renderers who think that the Qur'anic verse is directed against the supposedly blue-eyed Greeks and Romans ignored or were not aware of the verses *2-5 of Surat ar-Rum 30* that express the happiness of the Muslims for the victory of the "Blue-eyed" Romans over the "Dark-eyed" Persians. The happiness was felt not because of the color of the eyes of this group, rather,

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[40] – صعل الرأس: صغيره؛ ألأنط: قليل شعر اللحية؛ أحزر: ينظر بلحظ عينه.

[41] - Abu Hayyan at-Tawhidi, al-Basa'ir wa-dh-Dhakha'ir, ed, Di. Widad al-Qadi, vol. 6, p. 25, item56.

[42] - Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, al-'Iqd al-Farid, vol. 6, p. 232; Ibn Qutaibah, 'Uyun al-Akhbar, vol. 2, p.64.

because the Romans were Christians, believers in God, while the Persians were not. Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) says:

﴿ غلبت الروم في أدنى الأرض وهم من بعد غلبهم سيغلبون، في بضع سنين. لله الأمر من قبل ومن بعد. ويومئذ يفرح المؤمنون بنصر الله. ينصر من يشاء وهو العزيز الرحيم.﴾ (الروم ٣٠/٢-٥)

"**The Romans have been defeated. In the nearest land**[43]**, and they after their defeat, will be victorious. Within few years. The decision of the matter, before and after (these events) is only with Allah. And on that day, the believers (i.e. Muslims) will rejoice with the help of Allah. He helps whom He wills, and He is the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful."** (ar-Rum 30/2-5)

From the above verse, we learn that the Greeks and the Romans were not the enemies of the Arabs as the Persians were. Besides, the Greeks in general do not have blue eyes, they are like the Arabs have brown eyes. The Arabs knew this fact about the Greeks.

The question that comes to the mind of all Muslims, is, what about the thousands of Arabs who have blue eyes? Moreover, what about those blue-eyed people who accept Islam? Are they to be condemned regardless of their being Muslims?

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[43] - Nearest to the Hijaz, the greater Syria, i.e., Syria, Jordan, and Palestine.

Moreover, Allah(subhanahu wa ta' ala) used the color زرق *Zurq* as a metaphor to express the state of the sinners, and the criminals, and not to express the natural color of the physical eyes with which we are familiar.

Islam is a Religion for All Mankind

As Muslims we must realize and believe that Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) does not discriminate between peoples according to the color of their skin or their eyes, or if they are enemies of the Arabs or not, because Islam is not for the Arabs only. Islam is a religion for all mankind and Jinn.

As a matter of fact, the tribe of *Quraish*, the people of *Makkah*, to whom The Qur'an was first revealed and directed were on the best of terms with the Romans and the Greeks and had a strong trade relationship with them, as The Qur'an informs us in Chapter 106. Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) says

{ لإيلاف قريش، إيلافهم رحلة الشتاء والصيف.}

(قريش ١٠٦/١٠٣)

"**By the pact with which Quraish secured their caravans to set forth in winter and the summer.**" (Quraish 106/1-3)

Quraish's caravans used to travel in the winter to *Yaman* and in the summer to Syria which was ruled by

the Romans and the Greeks for trade. Therefore, based on the Words of Allah (subhanahu wa ta' ala) one can conclude that the relationship between the Arabs from one side and the Romans and the Greeks from the other side, relatively speaking, was good.

Moreover, The Qur'an was not revealed to please the polytheist Arabs by attacking their enemies. As a matter of fact, the Arabs, in their absolute majority, were not happy with The Qur'an; rather they rejected it and fought the Muslims and they did not submit to Islam until the Muslims under the leadership of Prophet (bppuh) defeated them.

As a matter of fact, the Arab tribes before Islam were the enemies of each other; some of them fought each other for over forty years. The Arabs never fought this kind of war against the Greeks or the Romans, or against any other outsider enemy for that matter. On the contrary, the people who invaded *Makkah* and created havoc and destruction all the way from *San'a'* in *Yaman* to *Makkah* were the black Abyssinians and not the supposedly white, blue-eyed Greeks and Romans, as *az-Zamakhshari* and few of The Qur'an interpreters and renderers claim.

Allah(subhanahu wa ta' ala) informed us of that invasion in The Qur'an:

{ ألم تر كيف فعل ربك بأصحاب الفيل؟ ألم يجعل كيدهم في تضليل.}
(الفيل ١٠٥/١-٢)

"**Don't you see how your Lord dealt with the owners of the elephant?**

Did He not bring their plotting to naught?"
(al-Fil 105/1-2)

Later on, when the Prophet's companions and the first Muslims carried Islam to the (blue-eyed) Greeks and Romans, they did not kill them, rather they called them to Islam and encouraged them with all peaceful means possible to make those blue-eyed people accept Islam.

Abu Bakr as-Siddiq (Radiya Allahu anhu) , the successor of the Prophet(pbbuh) , and the first caliph of Islam, and the commander-in-chief of the Arab Muslim army, before dispatching the Muslim troops against the Greeks and the Romans, addressed them commanding them not to kill any innocent non-fighting person:

"**See, that you avoid treachery. Depart not in any way from the right. You shall mutilate none, neither shall you kill child or aged man, nor any woman. Injure not the date-palm, neither burn it with fire, and cut not down any tree wherein is food for man or beast. Slay not the flocks and herds or camels, save for needful sustenance. You may eat of the meat that the locals shall bring unto you in their vessels, making mention thereon of the name of Allah. And the monks with shaven heads, if they submit, leave them unmolested. Now march forward in the name of**

Allah, and may He protect you from sword and pestilence."[44]

A similar injunction was given to the clearly brown eyed Persians.

Khalid Ibn al-Walid (Radiya Allahu anhu), the great Muslim general who led the Muslim troops against the Persians, wrote to the commander of the Persians' troops before he engaged him into battle:

"I ask you to become a Muslim so you will be safe, or enter you and your people under our protection, and pay the poll-tax; otherwise, do not blame anybody except your self. I brought you men who love death as much you love life."[45]

When *Khalid Ibn al-Walid (Radiya Allahu anhu)* met a delegation of the Christian Arabs of southern Iraq who were vassals of the Persians before Islam, he said to them:

"I invite you to Allah and to Islam, and if you accept, you are Muslims, have their rights and duties. But if you refuse to become Muslims, then you should pay the poll-tax, and if you refuse this, I brought you men

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[44] - See Assad Busool, Islam Relationship to Christianity and Judaism, p. 35.

[45] - At-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 2, pp. 347-348.

who love death more than you love life, and we will fight you until Allah judges between us and you."[46]

However, their leader said to *Khalid (Radiya Allahu anhu)* , " **We are in no need to fight you, we will stick to our religion and pay you the poll-tax.**" *Khalid (Radiya Allahu anhu)* accepted that from them and signed a peace treaty with them.[47]

The early Muslims were also very keen to protect the supposedly (blue-eyed) non-Muslim population of *al-Quds* (Jerusalem), to a degree never precedented or followed in the history of mankind. Indeed, their action, the ultimate in magnanimity which the early Muslims presented to the world, was the liberation of *al-Quds* (Jerusalem), where for the first time, possibly the last time in history, the head of a victorious state traveled for hundreds of miles in a barren desert on the back of a camel to give amnesty and security of their lives, property and religion to the population of a defeated city. This head of State was *'Umar Ibn al-Khattab (Radiya Allahu anhu)* ,the second caliph of Islam, who signed the following treaty with the Christian inhabitants of *al-Quds* (Jerusalem):

In The name of Allah, The Merciful, The Compassionate

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[46] - At-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 344.

[47] - At-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 344.

This is the security which *'Umar*, the servant of Allah, the commander of the faithful, grants to the people of Aelia' (Jerusalem). He grants to all, whether sick or sound, security for their lives, their possessions, their churches and their crosses, and for all that concerns their religion. Their churches shall not be changed into dwelling places, nor destroyed, neither shall their appurtenances be in any way diminished, nor the crosses of the inhabitants nor aught of their possessions, nor shall any constraint be put upon them in the matter of their faith, nor shall any one of them be harmed. And no Jew shall live with them in Aelia'.[48]

The last item of the treaty was requested by the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Here is another example of unprecedented magnanimity in dealing with a defeated enemy which actually was physically blue-eyed people.

"When *'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz* (ruled 717-720 C.E.) became a caliph, a delegation from the people of *Samarqand* in Central Asia, who are in their majority Turkic, blond, blue-eyed people, came to him complaining against the Muslim general, *Qutaibah Ibn Muslim*, the commander-in-chief of the Muslim army which liberated Central Asia. They claimed that *Qutaibah* attacked their city and captured it without sending them any ultimatum so that they might be ready

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[48] - At-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 3, p. 609; T. W. Arnold, the Preaching of Islam, pp. 56-57; See Assad Busool, Islam Relationship to Christianity and Judaism, p. 38.

for his attack. According to the Muslim's rule of war, the Muslim general was required to give the non-Muslim local inhabitants a choice among three alternatives:

1 - Accepting Islam

2 - Submitting and paying the poll-tax and living peacefully with the Muslims

3 - Engaging in war.

Hearing this, the Caliph, *'Umar Ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz* wrote to the governor of the province of Iraq to appoint a special judge to look into their complaint. The governor appointed the judge, *Jumai' Ibn Hadir an-Naji*. The judge listened to the pros and cons of the two sides and judged on behalf of the local inhabitants of *Samarqand* and ordered the Muslim army to withdraw from the city and to give the inhabitants the chance to fortify their city before warring against them if, indeed, they might decide to fight. The Muslim general, *Qutaibah Ibn Muslim* accepted the judge's verdict and ordered his troops to evacuate The city. However, the inhabitants of *Samarqand* had no desire for war and were deeply impressed by the Muslims' sense of justice. So they asked the Muslim troops to stay in their city and to live with them in peace."[49]

In addition to high morale and deep conviction in their faith, honesty is a major factor which helped the Arab Muslims succeed in their dealings with the local population of the liberated areas of Byzantium and Persia. The Muslims not only protected the liberated

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[49] - Al-Baladhuri, Futuh al-Buldan, p. 411; See Assad Busool, the Wise Judge, pp. 16-17.

population under their domain, the Muslims went as far as ransoming the war captives of the People of Covenant if enemies of Islam captured them in enemy attacks on Muslim Lands. Ransom was paid from the public treasury of the Muslims.[50]

A practical example stresses the rights of the People of the Covenant. When the Mongols in the 13th century defeated the Muslims in Syria, they took some people as war captives. Among them were Muslims and non-Muslims. The great Muslim scholar theologian *Ahmad Ibn Taimiyah* (662-729 H./1263-1328 C.E.) met with Gazan, the Mongol leader and asked him to free the captives. The Mongols leader freed the Muslims, but he told *Ibn Taimiyah*, 'We have Christians as captives, whom we brought from Jerusalem, those are not going to be freed.' *Ibn Taimiyah* said to him, 'All the captives you have from among the Jews and the Christians, who are our People of Covenant, we ought to free, and we are not going to leave any captive unfree, be it Muslim or from the People of the Covenant.' He was able to free all the captives without any exception.'[51]

As we see from The Qur'an, the Prophet's tradition and the tradition of the early Muslim leaders and scholars, no one is exempted from the mercy and grace of Allah(subuanahu wa – ta 'ala) because of his color, race, language or gender.

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[50] - Abu 'Ubaid, Kitab al-Amwal, pp. 168-169; See Assad Busool, Islam Relationship, p. 42.

[51] - Majmu' Fatawa Ibn Taimiyah, vol. 28, pp. 617-618; See Assad Busool, Islam Relationship, p. 42.

Islam laid the foundation of salvation for human beings in The Qur'an. Allah(subhanahu wa –ta ' ala says in The Qur'an:

{آمن الرسول بما أنزل إليه من ربه والمؤمنون، كل آمن بالله وملائكته وكتبه ورسله، لا نفرق بين أحد من رسله. وقالوا: سمعنا وأطعنا. غفرانك ربنا وإليك المصير. لا يكلف الله نفسا إلا وسعها، لها ما كسبت، وعليها ما اكتسبت. ربنا! لا تؤاخذنا إن نسينا أو أخطأنا. ربنا! ولا تحمل علينا إصرا كما حملته على الذين من قبلنا. ربنا! ولا تحملنا ما لا طاقة لنا به، واعف عنا، واغفر لنا، وارحمنا. أنت مولانا، فانصرنا على القوم الكافرين.}

(ألبقرة ٢/٢٨٥-٢٨٦)

"The Messenger believed in that which has been revealed unto him from his Lord and (so do) the believers. Each one believes in Allah and His angels and His Books and His messengers - We make no distinction between any of His messengers - and they say: 'We hear, and we obey. (We ask) Your forgiveness, our Lord! Unto You is the return'.

Allah tasks not a soul beyond its capacity. For it (is only) that which it has earned (of good deeds), and against it (only) that which has committed (of bad deeds)

Our Lord! Condemn us not if we forget, or make a mistake!

Our Lord! Lay not on us such a burden as You did lay on those before us!

Our Lord! Impose not on us that which we have no strength to bear!

Pardon us, absolve us and have mercy on us!
You, our Protector, give us victory over the disbelieving people." (al-Baqarah 2/285-286)

This Qur'anic verse laid the foundation for articles of the principles of faith in Islam. The articles of the principles of faith in Islam are pluralistic and universal. Muslims as individuals must at all times adhere to these principles. These principles include:

1 - Belief in Allah (God) the only deity
2 - Belief in His angels
3 - Belief in His revealed Books; *the Torah, the Injil* (Gospel), and *The Qur'an*
4 - Belief in all His messengers from Adam to Muhammad
5 - Belief in life after death
6 - Belief in the *Qadar* (Divine Decree).

Moreover, Muslims in their daily prayers must read a blessing for themselves as Muslims, the followers of Prophet Muhammad (pbbuh), and for the followers of Prophet *Ibrahim* (Abraham) (pbbuh) .

(O God! pray on Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad, as You prayed on *Ibrahim* and the followers of Ibrahim, among the whole universe, indeed You are Praiseworthy, Glorified. And bless Muhammad and the followers of Muhammad, as You blessed *Ibrahim* and the followers of Ibrahim, among the whole universe, indeed You are Praiseworthy, Glorified)

Race, Color, and Languages in Islam[52]

Islam accepts the difference of colors and languages among peoples as a grace from Allah(subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) because He, through His wisdom, created us like that, as He affirms in The Qur'an:

{ ومن آياته خلق السماوات والأرض، واختلاف ألسنتكم وألوانكم. إن في ذلك لآيات للعالمين.} (ألروم ٢٢/٣٠)

"**And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors. Indeed, in that are signs for men of knowledge.**" (ar-Rum 30/22)

Moreover, in the eyes of Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) humanity is one. He says:

{ يا أيها الناس! إنا خلقناكم من ذكر وأنثى، وجعلناكم شعوبا وقبائل لتعارفوا، إنّ أكرمكم عند الله أتقاكم. إن الله عليم خبير.} (الحجرات ١٣/٤٩)

"**O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and have made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the noblest of you, in the sight of Allah, is the best in conduct. Indeed, Allah is Knower, Aware.**" (al-Hujurat 49/13)

Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) also says:

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[52] - See Assad Busool, Islamic Fundamentalism, pp. 16-17.

{ ومن الناس والدواب والأنعام مختلف ألوانه كذلك، إنما يخشى الله من عباده العلماء. إن الله عزيز غفور.} (فاطر ٣٥/٢٨)

"Likewise, of people, and animals, and camels, are of various colors. It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is All-Mighty, Forgiving."
(Fatir 35/28)

Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) says in The Qur'an:

{ولو شاء ربك لجعل الناس أمة واحدة، ولا يزالون مختلفين.}

(هود ١١/١١٨)

"And if your Lord had willed, He verily would have made mankind one nation, yet they cease not differing." (Hud 11/118)

We learn from The Qur'an that Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) vehemently ruled out race, color, gender, and language as a basis for grace and favor in this world and salvation or punishment on the Day of Judgment. For instance He condemned *Abu Lahab*, the paternal uncle of the Prophet (pbbuh) because he was a staunch enemy of Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) , His Messenger(pbbuh) and Islam. He says:

{ تبت يدا أبي لهب وتب، ما أغنى عنه ماله وما كسب، سيصلى نارا ذات لهب.} (ألمسد ١١١/١-٣)

"The power of *Abu Lahab* will perish, and he himself will perish.
His wealth and gains will not help him (with Allah).

He will be roasted in flaming fire." (al-Lahab 111/1-3)

So *Abu Lahab's* blood relationship did not save him because he was a disbelieving, wicked, impious man who fought the Prophet (pbbuh) relentlessly.

Likewise, Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) excluded the son of Prophet *Nuh* (Noah) (Pbbuh) from His mercy and forgiveness, and informed *Nuh (pbbuh)* that he is not his son, because he was a non-believer and disobedient to Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) and to his father, even though *Nuh (pbbuh)* asked Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) forgiveness for his non-believing son. Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) says:

{ ونادى نوح ربه، فقال: رب! إن ابني من أهلي. وإن وعدك الحق، وأنت أحكم الحاكمين

{قال: يا نوح! إنه ليس من أهلك. إنه عمل غير صالح. فلا تسألن ما ليس لك به علم. إني أعظك أن تكون من الجاهلين.}

(هود ١١/٤٥–٤٦)

"**And *Nuh* cried unto his Lord and said: My Lord! Indeed, my son is of my family! Surely Your promise is the Truth and You are the Most Just of judges.**
He said: O *Nuh*! Indeed, he is not of your family; indeed, he committed an evil act, so ask not of Me that whereof you have no knowledge. I admonish you lest you be among the lost."
(Hud 11/45-46)

Also Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) says in The Qur'an:

{لن تنفعكم أرحامكم ولا أولادكم يوم القيامة يفصل بينكم.}

(الممتحنة ٣/٦٠)

"**Your ties of kindred and your children will avail you naught upon the Day of Resurrection. He will judge between you.**"
(al-Mumtahanah 60/3)

And He also says:

{ يا أيها الناس! اتقوا ربكم، واخشوا يوما لا يجزي والد عن ولـــده، ولا مولود هو جاز عن والده شيئا.} (لقمان ٣١/٣٣)

"**O mankind! Keep your duty to your Lord and worry about a Day when the parent will not be able to avail the child in aught, nor the child to avail the parent.**"
(Luqman 31/33)

The Prophet (pbbuh) implemented Allah's warning to us about our fate in the Hereafter by warning his daughter, his aunt, and his uncle that they should be pious, God fearing people, else he will not be able to help them with Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) on the Day of Judgment. He said:

{ يا فاطمة بنت محمد! لا أغني عنك من الله شيئا. يا صفيـــة عمـــة رسول الله! لا أغني عنك من الله شيئا. يا عباس بن عبد المطلـب! لا

أغني عنك من الله شيئا. يا بني عبد المطلب! لا أغني عنكم من اللـــه شيئا.}[٥٣]

"O *Fatimah*, the daughter of Muhammad! I will not be able to do anything for you with Allah. O *Safiyyah*, the Messenger of Allah's aunt! I will not be able to do anything for you with Allah. O *'Abbas, the son of 'Abd al-Muttalib*! I will not be able to do anything for you with Allah. O the family of *'Abd al-Muttalib*! I will not be able to do anything for you with Allah."

The basis for salvation is *Taqwa* (piety) and the basis for punishment is disbelief and evil acts. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta'ala) says:

{ فأما من أعطى واتقى، وصدق بالحسنى، فسنيسره لليسرى.
وأما من بخل واستغنى، وكذب بالحسنى، فسنيسره للعسرى. وما يغنـــي عنه ماله إذا تردى.} (الليل ٩٢/٥-١١)

"As for him who gives and is dutiful toward Allah, and believes in goodness; surely We will guide him to the right path.
But as for him who hoards and deems himself not in need for anyone, and disbelieves in goodness; surely We will guide him to adversity. His riches will not save him when he perishes."
(al-Lail 92/5-11)

The Prophet Muhammad(pbbuh) said:

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[٥٣] - إبن حزم، المفاضلة بين الصحابة، ص ٢٧٧.

{ إن ربكم واحد، وأباكم واحد. فلا فضل لعربي على أعجمي، ولا لأعجمي على عربي، ولا أحمر على أسود، ولا أسود على أحمر إلا بالتقوى. }

"**Indeed your Lord is One, and your father is one, so there is no virtue for and Arab over a non-Arab, or for a non-Arab over an Arab, nor for a white over a black, or for a**
over a white except by piety."[54]

Also the Prophet Muhammad (Pbbuh) said:

{ إن الله خلق آدم من قبضة من جميع الأرض، فجاء بنو آدم على قدر الأرض؛ جاء منهم الأحمر، والأسود، والأبيض، وبين ذلك. والسهل، والحزن، والخبيث، والطيب. }

"**Allah** (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) **created Adam from a handful of dust, which He picked from the whole earth; therefore, the children of Adam were born according to the nature of the earth; amongst them came the red, the white, the black, the dark, the yellow and something in between, and the easy going, the hard, the good and the evil.**"[55]

The Prophet Muhammad(pbbuh) informed us that Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) does not look at our shapes,

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[54] - At-Tabarani, al-Mu'jam al-Awsat, vol. 5, p. 86, hadith 4749; Abu Bakr al-Haithami, Majma' az-Zawa'id, vol. 8, p. 84.

[55] - At-Tabari, Tarikh, vol. 1, p.91; at-Tirmidhi; Abu Dawud; Ahmad Ibn Hanbal; al-Hakim, al-Mustadrak, vol. 2, pp. 261-262.

or forms, or our origin or our wealth, He rather looks at our hearts and deeds. In other words we are judged by Allah (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) according to our good intentions and good deeds. The Prophet Muhammad (pbbuh) said:

{ إن الله لا ينظر إلى صوركم، وأموالكم، ولكن ينظر إلـــى قلوبكـــم وأعمالكم.}[٥٦]

"**Indeed, Allah** (subhanahu wa – ta 'ala) **does not look (judge you) at your shapes and your wealth, rather He looks at your hearts and your deeds.**"

This *hadith* is reported in a longer version:

{ إن الله لا ينظر إلى أحسابكم، ولا إلى أنسابكم، ولا إلى أجســامكم، ولا إلى أموالكم، ولكن ينظر إلى قلوبكم، فمن كان له قلـــب صـــالح تحنن الله عليه، وإنما أنتم بنو آدم، وأحبكم إليه أتقاكم }[٥٧]

"Indeed, Allah does not look at your noble origin, or your genealogy, or your bodies, or your wealth, rather He looks into your hearts, and whoever has a pious heart, Allah will be kind to him. Indeed, you are the children of Adam, and the most beloved among you to Allah is the most pious." (al-Qurtubi, 16/342)

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[٥٦] – مختصر صحيح مسلم، حديث ١٧٧٦، ص ٤٧٣.

[٥٧] – تفسير القرطبي، م ١٦، ص ٣٤٢.

Muslim Inter-Racial Marriage

In order to create a cohesive Muslim society, free of racial prejudice Islam promoted inter-racial and inter-cultural marriage among Muslims. Since Islam is a religion of humanity, this practice is not only acceptable, rather it is highly recommended.

Since it is difficult in our own circumstances as Muslims in this multi-cultural and multi-racial society where many members of this society accept Islam almost daily, in addition to our own different cultural and racial background as Muslims who immigrated into this country from all over the world, there is no escape but to practice inter-cultural and inter-racial marriage, because the unifying element between us as Muslims is the religion of Islam and not our culture or language. As we all know, we do not speak the same language or dress the same or even eat the same food, but we pray the same prayers, celebrate the same holidays, pay *Zakah*, fast the same month and perform *Hajj* at the same time.

As a matter of fact, Muslims from the time of the Prophet (pbbuh) practiced inter-cultural, and interracial marriages. The Prophet (pbbuh) himself practiced interracial marriage when he took *Maria*, the Copt as a wife after she accepted Islam. She became the mother of his son, *Ibrahim* who died in infancy. Also *Hassan Ibn Thabit*, the Prophet's (pbbuh) private poet married Maria's sister, *Sirin* and she gave birth to his son, *'Abd*

ar-Rahman who became a poet no less famous than his father, *Hassan*.

Salman, the Persian and *Bilal*, the Abyssinian, these two great Companions of the Prophet (pbbuh) of non-Arab origin married Arab women. Also *Zaid Ibn Harithah*, the adopted son of the Prophet (pbbuh) of Arab origin married the Prophet's (pbbuh) maid, *'Umm Aiman, Barakah*, the Abyssinian and she gave birth to *'Usamah Ibn Zaid*, one of the great military commanders of Islam.

The Prophet (pbbuh) loved this *'Usamah* as a grandson so much that the *Sahabah* (Companions) of the Prophet (Pbbuh) called him: **"The beloved, the son of the beloved."**

Later on, we find that many *'Umayyad* and most of the *Abbasid* caliphs were sons of non-Arab women, in other words, the caliphs of Islam married non-Arab women and their sons became the caliphs of Islam. As a matter of fact, one can go as far as the first Muslim Prophet, *Ibrahim (pbbuh)* who married a woman from a different culture and race than his; i.e. *Hagar*, the Egyptian woman, the mother of his son, *Isma'il (pbbuh)* the father of the Arabs who in turn married a woman from a different culture than his. She belonged to the Arab tribe of *Jurhum* who dwelled at *Makkah* after his arrival there. From this inter-cultural marriage, Prophet Muhammad (pbbuh) was later born.

Also Prophet *Musa (pbbuh)* married the daughter of prophet *Shu`aib* (pbbuh) who was from a different cultural background. So Prophets from *Ibrahim* (pbbuh)

to Prophet Muhammad (pbbuh) practiced inter-cultural marriage within the faith of Islam.

This non-prejudiced, multi-cultural and multi-racial society which Islam created under the banner of:

لا إله إلا الله، محمد رسول الله = **There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His Messenger**, produced the highest form of civilization which mankind ever knew in all its long history until our own time. The multi-cultural Islamic civilization was the torch which lighted the dark ages of Europe and brought the rise of the European renaissance.

It is very difficult to imagine how the Islamic civilization would be if the Muslim Arabs who carried the torch of Islam to the other peoples out of Arabia abstained from mixing and marrying non-Arab Muslim women or did not let non-Arab Muslims marry their women. But it was Islam which brought all these multi-cultural and multi-colorful people together and made them mix and marry and produce a unique breed of human beings which created and developed this great and most wonderful civilization which very proudly we call Islamic civilization. And it should stay so in our own time until the Day of Judgment *In sha'a Allah ta'ala.*

Unfortunately, modern Muslims for one reason or another have turned away from being universalists, pluralistic as Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) and His Messenger (pbbuh) wanted them to be, to being clannish and regionalists to the degree that many of them are not ready to marry Muslims who do not belong to their linguistic or national or geographical background, even

while they are reciting the Words of Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) in The Qur'an:

{ إن هذه أمتكم أمة واحدة وأنا ربكم فاعبدون.} (الأنبياء ٢٢/٩٢)

"**Lo! this *'Ummah* of yours is a single 'Ummah and I am your Lord, therefore worship and serve Me."**
(al-Anbiya' 22/92)

Islam Promotes Interfaith Tolerance and Shuns Aggression

Islam, right from its beginning in *Makkah,* believes and promotes tolerance toward other peoples and religions, as long as the adherents of that faith or religion are peaceful toward Muslims. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) instructed His Prophet (pbbuh) how he should deal with the idol worshippers of *Makkah.* He says in The Qur'an:

{ قل: يا أيها الكافرون! لا أعبد ما تعبدون. ولا أنتم عابدون ما أعبد. ولا أنا عابد ما عبدتم. ولا أنتم عابدون ما أعبد. لكم دينكم ولي دين.} (الكافرون ١٠٩/١-٦)

"**Say (O Muhammad): O disbelievers!**
I worship not that which you worship.
Nor worship you that which I worship.
And I shall not worship that which you worship.
Nor will you worship that which I worship.
Unto you your religion, and unto me my religion."
(al-Kafirun 109/1-6)

Even though Islam stretched its arm to the disbelievers to live peacefully side by side, nonetheless the disbelievers rejected the peacefully stretched hand and declared war on the Muslims until they forced them with the Prophet (pbbuh) to emigrate from their home town *Makkah* to *Madinah*, and establish their faith in a strange town.

However, this violent action by the disbelievers of *Makkah* did not hinder Islam in stretching its hand to the followers of other religions in *Madinah* and all over to live peacefully side by side. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) says:

{ قل: يا أهل الكتاب: تعالوا إلى كلمة سواء بيننا وبينكم، ألا نعبد إلا الله، ولا نشرك به شيئا، ولا يتخذ بعضنا بعضا أربابا من دون الله. فإن تولوا. فقولوا: اشهدوا بأنا مسلمون.} (آل عمران ٣/٦٤)

"**Say: O People of the Scripture!**[58] **Come to an agreement between us and you: That we worship none but Allah, and that**
we associate no partners with Him, and that none of us take others for Lords beside Allah. And if they turn away, then say: Bear witness that we are Muslims." (Al 'Imran 3/64)

Even a mere discussion between the Muslims and the people of the Scripture should be held in a good manner

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[58] - Jews and Christians.

from the side of the Muslims, as Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) orders Muslims in The Qur'an:

{ ولا تجادلوا أهل الكتاب إلا بالتي هي أحسن، إلا الذين ظلموا منهم، وقولوا: آمنا بالذي أنزل إلينا، وأنزل إليكم، وإلهنا وإلهكم واحد، ونحن له مسلمون.}

(ألعنكبوت ٢٩/٤٦)

"**And argue not with the People of the Scripture, except in the best way, save with wrong-doers amongst them; and say: We believe in that which had been revealed unto us and revealed unto you; our God and your God is One, and it is to Him we surrender in Islam.**" (al-'Ankabut 29/46)

The Prophet (pbbuh) put the principle of peaceful religious co-existence, as ordained in The Qur'an, into practice for the first time in history between the three monotheistic religions; Islam, Christianity and Judaism. He and his Muslim followers migrated from *Makkah* to *Madinah* in the year 622 C.E. and encountered many Jewish tribes that dwelled within *Madinah* and around it at that time. The Prophet (pbbuh) thought it right to live peacefully with them as People of Scripture. He signed a treaty with them which regulated the peaceful co-existence between the two monotheistic religions. Among the articles of that treaty which concern us here are the following:

"The Prophet (pbbuh) wrote a document concerning the Emigrants (Muslims of *Makkah*) and the Helpers

(Muslims of *Madinah*) in which he made a friendly agreement with the Jews and established them in their religion and their property, and stated the reciprocal obligations as follows:

To the Jew who joins us belong help and equality. He shall not be wronged nor shall his enemies be aided.

The peace of the believers is indivisible.

The Jews of *Banu 'Awf* are one community with the Muslims (the Jews have their religion and the Muslims have theirs,) their freedom and their persons except those who behave unjustly and sinfully; for they hurt but themselves and their families..."[59]

Later on, a deputation from the Christian bishops of *Najran* (in Northern *Yaman*) came to the Prophet Muhammad (pbbuh) in *Madinah*. When the time of their prayers came, they stood and prayed in the Prophet's mosque, and he said that they were to be left to do so. They prayed towards the east.[60] Before they left, the Prophet(pbbuh) gave them a written pledge of amnesty and protection of their faith, churches, and property as long as they remained at peace with the Muslims.[61]

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[59] - Ibn Is/haq, The Life of Muhammad, trans. by A. Guillaume, pp. 231-233; See Assad Busool, Islamic Fundamentalism, p. 20.

[60] - Ibn Is/haq, pp. 270-271; Busool, Islamic Fundamentalism? p. 20.

[61] - Ibn Kathir, as-Sirah an-Nabawiyah, vol. 4, p. 106; Busool, Islamic Fundamentalism? pp. 20-21.

Later on we find that the Muslim caliphs and generals extended this kind of amnesty and protection to the people of Jerusalem, Damascus, Iraq, Persia, India, Egypt, North Africa and Spain when the Muslim armies liberated these areas from the oppression and despotism of their pre-Islamic rulers. As soon as the Muslim armies defeated the regular armies of these countries, they laid down their arms and left the local non-Muslim population to live freely in the Muslim State, unharassed and unmolested.[62]

However, even though Islam promotes peaceful co-existence between Islam and other religions, if the followers of that religion attack Muslims and start any belligerent acts, that does not mean Islam is a pacifist religion and its adherent should be pacifists, Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) gave the Muslims the right to defend themselves with all means possible to defend themselves and their faith, but they should not be aggressors.

Therefore, Islam is a religion of *Jihad* in peace and in war. To understand this, it is appropriate to discuss the principle of *Jihad* in Islam. Because this most noble principle of Islam is the most misused, abused and most misunderstood principle.

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[62] - Assad Busool, Islamic Fundamentalism? p. 21.

Islam is a Religion of Jihad

Islam is a religion of *Jihad*, in peace and in war. Jihad is one of the noblest principles of Islam and it continues until the Day of Judgment. The Prophet (pbbuh) said:

{ الجهاد ماض منذ بعثني الله إلى أن يقاتل آخر أمتي المسيح الدجـــال، لا يبطلـــه جور جائر، ولا عدل عادل، والإيمان بالأقدار.}

"*Jihad* is continuing from the time Allah sent me until the last of this *'Ummah* (Muslims) fights the *Dajjal* (Anti Christ); neither the despotism of a tyrant nor the justice of a just ruler would stop it."[63]

Jihad means struggling and fighting against all evil powers, from within and from without the community. The Struggle against evil powers can be with arms when it is necessary. *Jihad* is a muli-faceted principle. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) says in The Qur'an:

"O you who believe ! Stand out firmly for justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, and whether it be (against) rich or poor. For Allah can best protect both. So follow not passion lest you

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[63] - Abu Dawud, Sunan; vol. 3, p. 40, hadith 2532; al-Khattabi, Ma'alim as-Sunan Sharh Sunan Abi Dawud, vol. 2, p.204, hadith 693.

swerve, and if you distort (justice) or decline to do justice, verily, Allah is Ever Informed of what you do." (an-Nisa' 4/135)

The Prophet Muhammad (pbbuh) elaborated on Allah's Words and exhorted Muslims to fight all evil and wrong-doings with all means possible. He said:

{من رأى منكم منكرا، فليغيره بيده، فإن لم يستطع فبلسانه، فإن لم يستطع فبقلبه، وذلك أضعف الأيمان.}

"**Any one of you who witnesses an evil-act being committed must stop it with his hand, but if he could not (use his hand), he must stop it with his tongue, but if he could not, he must stop it with his heart, and that is the weakest level of faith.**"[64]

A Muslim does not have to perform *Jihad* with arms; he can perform a verbal *Jihad* by admonishing people at all levels to be decent and perform justice. This kind of *Jihad*, the Prophet (pbbuh) considered to be a very high form of *Jihad*. he said:

{ أفضل الجهاد كلمة حق عند سلطان جائر.}

"**A high form of *Jihad* is a word of truth and justice to a despotic ruler.**"[65]

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[64] - Sahih Muslim; an-Nawawi, Riyad as-Salihin, ed. by Muhyi d-Din Jarrah, p. 125, hadith 185.

[65] - Abu Dawud, Sunan; at-Tirmidhi, Sunan; Ibn Majah, Sunan; Ibn Hanbal, Musnad; Ibn 'Asakir, Mukhtasar Tarikh Dimashq, vol. 26, p. 241.

Taking care of one's parents is also a high form of *Jihad*, equal to fighting in the battlefield and the way of Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) .

{جاء رجل إلى النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم، فقال: يـــا رســـول اللـــه! أجاهد؟ قال: ألك أبوان؟ قال: نعم. قال: ففيهما فجاهد.}

Once a man came to the Prophet(pbbuh) and said:
"I want to perform *Jihad*."
The Prophet (Pbbuh) said: "Are your parents living?"
The man said: "Yes."
The Prophet (pbbuh) said: "**Go back and perform Jihad by taking care of your parents**."[66]

From the prophet's (pbbuh) sayings, we learn that a Muslim must try to stop an evil-act or injustice by all means available to him/her, because it is incumbent on Muslims to be promoters of good and preventers of evil. In order to be promoters of good and to live in peace, Muslims must be ready militarily at all times. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) says:

{وأعدوا لهم ما استطعتم من قوة ومن رباط الخيل، ترهبـــون بـــه عدو الله وعدوكم وآخرين من دونهم لا تعلمونهم. أللـــه يعلمـــهم. وما تنفقوا من شيء في سبيل الله يوف إليكم وأنتـــم لا تظلمـــون. وإن جنحوا للسلم فاجنح لها، وتوكل على الله. إنه هـــو الســـميع العليم.} (ألأنفال ٨/٦٠-٦١)

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[66] - Abu Dawud, Sunan; Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani, Fat/h al-Bari.

"Make ready for them all you can of (armed) force and of horses tethered,[67] that thereby you may scare of the enemy off Allah and your enemy, and others beside them you know not.
Allah knows them. Whatsoever you spend in the way of Allah it will be repaid to you in full, and you will not be wronged.
And if they incline to peace (*as-Salm*), incline you also to it and trust in Allah. Indeed, He is the Hearer, the Knower."
(al-Anfal 8/60-61)

Isn't that what modern political scientists and politicians call "Armed peace and deterrence?"

Aggression is forbidden in Islam, but war for self defense is incumbent on all Muslims capable of fighting, as Allah (subhanahu wa –ta 'ala) says in The Qur'an:

{ وقاتلوا في سبيل الله الذين يقاتلونكم، ولا تعتدوا. إن اللـــه لا يحـب المعتدين.} (البقرة ٢/١٩٠)

"Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Indeed, Allah loves not aggressors." (al-Baqarah 2/190)

Muslims must keep fighting aggressive, oppressive force until persecution is no more. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) says:

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[67] - Horses in the past were the striking force, the counterpart of tanks in modern warfare, therefore, in our days, horses are replaced with tanks.

"And fight them until persecution is no more, and the rule of Allah prevails. But if they desist, then let there be no hostility except against wrongdoers."
(al-Baqarah 2/193)

A Muslim does not kill people for the sake of killing. Murder is very strongly banned and condemned in Islam. Slaying people must be for a just reason and only allowed within the law. Persecution and violation of basic human rights for a whole community or a group of people because of race, color, language, creed and gender, or even for an individual, is a gross injustice and a main reason for helping those persecuted and oppressed to get rid of their persecutors even with the help of armed power when word power does not help. In modern political language, in order to solve any crisis, Muslims must start with diplomacy; however, when diplomacy fails, then they have to resort to armed force. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) says in The Qur'an:

"Say: Come! I will recite unto you that which your Lord had made a sacred duty for you: That you ascribe nothing as partner unto Him and that you do good to parents, and that you slay not your children because of poverty - We provide for you and for them - and that you approach not lewd things whether open or concealed. And that you slay not the life which Allah had made sacred, save in course of justice. This He commanded you, in order that you may discern."
(al-An'am 6/151)

Islam demands that Muslims' first concern must be the protection and survival of the community.

Moreover, Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) orders Muslims to continue to invite people to goodness and enjoin right conduct and forbid evil, at all times. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) says in The Qur'an:

·And let there be from you a band of people who invite to goodness, and enjoin right conduct and forbid evil conduct. Such are they who are successful." (Al 'Imran 3/104)

Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) also says:

·And the believers, men and women, are supporters of each other; they enjoin the right and forbid the wrong, and they establish worship and they pay Zakah, and they obey Allah and His Messenger. As for these, Allah will have mercy on them. Allah is Mighty, Wise." (at-Tawbah 9/71)

Conclusion

Islam is the religion of all humanity regardless of color, race, language, and gender.

We human beings all belong to Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) , but some people for one reason or another think that Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) belongs to them, and He is their God, and He loves them best of all peoples of the earth. Since He loves them, then He must please them and do whatever they ask Him to do. They wrongly believe that they did Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) favor by believing in Him and worshipping Him. On the contrary, Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) did them the favor by guiding them to Islam. Allah says in The Qur'an:

"**They make it a favor unto you (Muhammad) that they have become Muslims. Say: Deem not your Islam a favor unto me; nay, but Allah does confer a favor on you, inasmuch as He had led you to the Faith, if you are earnest.**" (al-Hujurat 49/17)

Therefore, let nobody feel he is chosen by Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) because he believes in Him. On the contrary, it is a duty upon all human beings to believe in Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) and to worship Him, to show their thanks for the Grace and favors that He bestowed upon all of them.

A believer in Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) must be humble and not arrogant. He should not feel that he is

better than other people, and he should not be judgmental. Let Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) decide that and judge who is the better human being. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) says in The Qur'an:
"Allah will judge between you on the Day of Resurrection concerning that wherein you used to differ." (al-Hajj 22/69)

In the eyes of Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) the best of human beings is the one who believes in Him, worships Him and does good deeds. Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala)) says in The Qur'an:

"By the Time! Indeed, mankind is in a state of loss, save those who believe (in Allah) and do good deeds, and exhort one another to truth, exhort one another to endurance."
(al-'Asr 103/1-3)

Let us live with each other as loving human beings, believing in Allah (subhanahu wa-ta 'ala) and worshipping Him regardless of our race, color, gender and language. He is the Creator, the Lord, and the Sustainer of all of us.

The Prophet Muhammad (pbbuh) said:

{ الخلق عيال الله، فأحب خلقه إليه، أنفعهم لعياله. }[٦٨]

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[68] - Al-Mundhiri, Forty Hadith on Assisting the Muslim, tr. into English by Assad Busool, hadith 1.

"The people are the dependents of Allah, and the most beloved of Him is the one is the most helpful to His dependents."